



WELCOME REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE
TAX
SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

AT THE

SADC MINISTERIAL WORKSHOP ON ILLEGAL
TRADE IN WILDLIFE

08TH JULY 2016

AVANI HOTEL, GABORONE, BOTSWANA

Theme:
“Towards eliminating Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Region”.

Your Excellency, Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and Chairperson of SADC;

Honorable Ministers;

Excellencies, the Heads of Diplomatic Missions;

Representatives of International and Regional Cooperating Partners;

Senior Government and SADC Secretariat Officials;

Distinguished Delegates and Participants;

Members of the Media;

It is a privilege and honour to welcome you to this workshop on illegal trade in wildlife whose theme is “***Towards eliminating Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Region.***”

This is the 3rd of a series of workshops called by His Excellency Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and the current Chairperson of SADC in response to critical challenges which require immediate and innovative solutions. The first workshop was held on 16 May 2016, focusing on Food Security and Poverty Eradication and the second Workshop was held on 20 June 2016, which focused on Water and Energy. This workshop provides another opportunity to discuss the escalating problem of illegal killing and trade in wild species of fauna and flora. The objective of this workshop is to generate a better understanding of the magnitude of the problem, the root causes, and identify measures that can be undertaken in order to address the problem more efficiently, effectively and sustainably.

Your Excellency,

It is a fact known by all that SADC is rich in natural resources with SADC Member States supporting a population of about 300,000 African elephants, which represents 64% of the continent population. Furthermore, the region has the largest of the remaining population of Rhino with South

Africa conserving 82% of the Africa's rhino (estimated at 20,954 in 2012). The region is also a home to other wildlife species including lions, buffaloes, kudus, zebras and other antelopes. In addition, the region hosts a large number of plant species, some of which are not found anywhere else in the world. These species of fauna and flora are the backbone of the tourism industry, significantly contributing to economic growth and the livelihoods of rural communities.

Over the years, these resources have come under mounting pressure from human population growth, the expansion of farmlands, the growing demand for energy, infrastructure development, and climate change. As one of the measures to respond to this challenge, the Region adopted the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-poaching Strategy that was approved by SADC in November 2015. This strategy identifies priority areas for action including improvement and strengthening of field protection and law enforcement; integration of people and nature; and the establishment of the regional Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit among others. The strategy derives its mandate from the *Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement*, and complements other on-going Member States collaborative efforts.

Notwithstanding the ongoing efforts, illegal wildlife trade remains a major challenge in our region. In recognition of this challenge, His Excellency Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and Chairperson of SADC has convened this very important and timely workshop which provides an avenue to ponder on this matter and devise practical solutions.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to inform you that the Government of the Republic of South Africa will be hosting the 17th Conference of United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) from 24th September to 5th October 2016. The Secretariat in collaboration with Member States has prepared a Regional Common Position which will be cleared by Ministers responsible for Environment and Natural Resources. The position paper will be shared with Ministers during the course of this meeting.

Allow me to take this opportunity on your behalf, to thank His Excellency Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and Chairperson of SADC, for convening this important and timely workshop that affords us an opportunity to contribute to the efforts towards combating illegal poaching and trade in wildlife in the region; and to invite His Excellency, to address this workshop.

Your Excellency, Sir!

I thank you.

Ke a leboga!!!!!!!!!!

Pula!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Pula !!!!!!!!!!!!!